

palace, with thoroughfares for pedestrians in every possible direction.

The mansions, or rather "Houses," of the British aristocracy present a still more sombre appearance of exclusion than any other class of building. Lansdowne, Burlington, Chandos, Apsley, Devonshire, Holland, Portland, &c., are known to the traveller who has entered every regal or princely palace on the continent, chiefly by dead, black, brick walls; within which the student of art can only arrive by a waste of what to him is literally blood and treasure, and whose gates are opened to the foreigner as a most especial favour only, be his standing in the world of art that of a Thorwaldsen or a Canova. Imagination can hardly depict the fate of a card, inscribed "H. Vernet," presented at the porter's lodge at Chiswick, with a request to be allowed to see, from the lawn, an architectural gem; yet the sketches by our artists from the interiors of continental palaces are realities.

Behind these blank walls, no proprietor thought of building a grand facade: what contented him in town was good enough in the country: what suited the peer, was sufficient for the prince and the nation; and so behold the degradation of English architecture. How much better it were to bring foreigners to study here, and to detain our native students, it is useless to attempt to point out in few words.

Another effect of the system of inclosures resolves itself into the question, has any man a right to immure art because he is rich enough? And this question, once clearly asked, demands, and will receive, sooner than might be expected, a practical answer; the law of copyright, the reward of the artist, and self-interest, all being involved in the discussion which must ensue; but, till this be settled, it would be desirable, for the sake of the arts, that the gentry of England should bear in mind, that separation from the commons has always been the ruin of the nobility, more so than confusion with the masses; and that the poor only envy the rich, while the miser is by all men detested, ridiculed, and never forgiven.

JOHN W. PAPWORTH.

#### NEGLECT OF SCULPTURE IN ENGLAND.

ONE might suppose that in a nation so rich as Great Britain, where commerce is concentrated, arts should flourish in proportion as manufactures progress; that as wealth increases, and her subjects become more affluent, so, also, they should become more refined, and that the taste for fine-art evidences in all the Schools of Design should keep pace with the prosperity of the people. Such would be the impression of a native-born subject of the colonies, who had but read of picture-galleries, studios, and schools, and who had seen but the pictorial emblems as conveyed by engravings and printed collectanea. History tells of the perfection to which masters had attained in ancient Greece and Rome, and the treasured remains of antiquity discover, from the transcendental quality of those examples that are extant, what must have been the encouragement given to genius by states which were rulers of the then known universe?

He, however, who has travelled over the European limits, sees that such ruminations, however natural, are the reverse of the fact; for the pettiest principality of this quarter of the globe is richer than England, not only in works of art, but in artists, who are known and appreciated as the harbingers of science and taste.

It may be that the pursuits of trade absorb in money-getting all the thoughts and faculties of those who found fortunes and families on the spirit of adventure, in commerce or manufacture; and that the inducement for aspiring minds to follow in the thrifty career is too strong an incentive, to permit the man who is ardent for distinction to follow in the slow walk of painting, sculpture, &c., and of the illustrious men whose works have survived the wreck of thousands of years. It may be that our climate is unpropitious for such pursuits, as it is certainly ill calculated for the endurance of products from the easel or the living marble. The latter circumstance is certainly most inimical to the open display of fine works, and may account

for the paucity at home of objects such as adorn the palaces, museums, and the public places abroad.

It is needless to point out the statues and groups which stand at Naples, Rome, and other cities, or those of the Tuileries, with which we are more conversant. Let those who have seen them look at our squares and places, our parks and gardens! Here we have scope and space enough, and they who know anything of the state of the English school, also know that there is much latent talent, that there are men capable of acquiring distinction, but neglected and chilled as our own region, some of them having sufficiently signalled their merit, but most of them unemployed or pining in indigence.

Science may be more the turn of the time, and more the handmaiden of fortune as conducing to wealth, and as she has been fostered so has she advanced: the country teems with her triumphs, because the country protects and rewards those results which connect remote lands, and bring tidings with the speed of lightning. The fine arts have no such preternatural services to offer: they please the fancy, elevate the mind, but fill not the pocket, and therefore are they slighted or left to a more convenient season.

In all professions there exists a competition that, in a country so overstocked with population, makes pre-eminence extremely difficult of attainment: this may be said of all the faculties—of the law, physic, divinity—but how much greater is the rivalry besetting the early career of a painter or sculptor? Their arts can hardly be called indigenous to the soil of Britain: they first flourished and yet continue to thrive amongst the continental states, and thence the enterprising student comes hitherward to reap the harvest of reward which a wealthy state alone can bestow on the profession. Our travelled gentry visit Rome, Florence, Naples, Paris, &c., frequent their studios, acquire or affect a taste for what it is fashionable to admire, order busts and statues there, and afterwards invite professors to our capital, where they give orders and procure the support of their acquaintance at home.

If an Englishman be ever selected abroad to chisel a head or group, he must at least have a studio at Rome: a work for being foreign is the more prized; for, it is as with Barbaric pearl, the most perfect example of which, if found in a native from the beds near Harwich, would not meet a purchaser at the price of a sham Roman. One great cause of our want of taste in sculpture is the absence of fine models, which are essential to create a taste, or the shutting in from public view such as adorn temples like St. Paul's or the Abbey. As to public places, if any statuary exist, it is of a character ill calculated to impress the mind with the poetry of design: there is a single figure here on the top of a column, sometimes astride, and generally in position (such as a line of railings) ill suited even to the individual model; but we have no groups, no compositions, in sunny places: our squares are sombre and dull, and in all London there is but one having fountains, and that wholly devoid of ornamental and fantastic art. There is behind the Horse Guards a noble esplanade, and on the area are stationed two long guns, surrounded by spikes, which I heard a provincial call a *skier de freeze*.

Buckingham Palace has certainly given a high position to sculpture, and the group of charity, although beyond the reach of criticism, nods favourably on art from the parapet: possibly we may anticipate that the plateau in front, lately enlarged, may exhibit something even with the way of the passenger, which, whilst it assimilates with the taste that decks the Tuileries, the Boboli, or the Giardini, may inspire the languishing native genius of the land.

Of late, the turn for testimonials in bronze or marble would seem to favour the advance of sculpture amongst English artists: those about to be dedicated to Peel may certainly puzzle the school to strike out a new attitude for that personation, and to invest them with togas in a thousand different shapes; but how many of these are given to foreigners, how few to native talent! In a Scotch city (nameless) the work is to be given only to an Italian! In many English districts, not to the most meritorious, but to the most favoured.

Versification, Poetry, and its patronage have passed away, and there remains to Macnair for marble.

The dearth of works in our Exhibition tells the tale of neglect: if there were encouragement there would be exposed the products of industry. Would it not be wise in the Government of the country to sustain and draw out the capabilities of artists? There are pedestals erected in Trafalgar-square which are naked, and perhaps only awaiting some dead hero to immortalize a living genius. Suppose 10,000*l.* were annually given to revive (of originate) a taste for sculpture, would not the country profit by its humanizing influence? At present there is little more acumen amongst the multitude on the subject than might suffice to discriminate doubtfully between the group of the Princess Charlotte's tomb at Windsor and the statue of George the Fourth at King's-cross, or of Queen Victoria in Pithello, if some horror-stricken dilettanti, on discovering the barbarism of the two latter examples, had not removed them. There are, at this moment, mouldering in the studios of British artists, splendid models that would do honour to any age or nation, but which are unnoticed or unknown, because sculpture is not fashionable,—and there stand in the hall of a millionaire in the west-end but plaster casts of ancient masters, and not a single product from the chisel!

The year 1851 may infuse a spirit of excellence in this art; but if the subject be indifferent to the Government, and they withhold the legitimate support, this branch of the fine arts must become extinct, and will not easily be resuscitated. QUONDAM.

#### IRON AND GLASS FOR BUILDINGS.

THE OPENING MEETING AT SOCIETY OF ARTS.

AT a meeting of the Society of Arts, held on the 13th, Mr. Paxton read a paper on the origin and details of construction of the building for the Exhibition of 1851, much of which has already appeared at different times in our pages. In the course of it he said,—

In 1828, when I first turned my attention to the building and improvement of glass structures, the various forcing-houses at Chatsworth, as at other places, were formed of coarse thick glass and heavy woodwork, which rendered the roofs dark and gloomy, and on this account very ill suited for the purposes they were intended to answer. My first object was to remove this evil; and, in order to accomplish it, I lightened the rafters and sashbars, by bevelling off their sides, and some houses which were afterwards built in this manner proved very satisfactory. I also at this time contrived a light sashbar having a groove for the reception of the glass: this groove completely obviated a disadvantage connected with the old mode of glazing, namely, the putty becoming continually displaced by the sun, frost, and rain, after the sashes had been made for a short time, and the wet by this means finding its way betwixt the glass and the wood, and producing a continual drip in rainy weather. About this period the desire for metallic roofs began to extend in every direction, and, as such structures had a light and graceful appearance, it became a question of importance as to the propriety of using metal sashes and rafters, instead of wooden ones, for horticultural purposes. After carefully observing the effects of those built by various persons, it became apparent to me that the expansion and contraction of metal would always militate against its general adoption, as at no season of the year could the sashes and rafters be made to fit. This extra expense also of erecting metallic roofed houses was a consideration. In 1833, I contemplated building a new range of hot-houses, and being desirous of knowing how much they would cost if erected of metal, a plan of the range was prepared and sent to Birmingham, and another to Sheffield, with a desire to be furnished with estimates for that purpose. The estimate from Birmingham was 1,800*l.* and the other, from Sheffield, was 1,850*l.* These appeared to me such enormous sums, that I at once set about calculating how much the range would cost if built of wood under my own inspection; and the result was that I was able to complete the whole range, including masonry (which was omitted in the metal estimates), for less than 500*l.* Besides the extra cost of metallic roofs, we must add the extreme heat of such houses in hot weather and their coldness in times of frost, the liability to breakage of glass from expansion and contraction of the metal, the very limited duration of the smaller portions, as sashbars, from corrosion, by exposure to the alterations of heat, cold, and moisture, inseparable from gardening operations, and which